

This is the very accent, the very temperament, the very vocabulary of the later Yeats; so much so that any student of modern poetry might at once say the lines were Mr. Yeats's. The resemblance is not solely between the later Yeats and the Dryden of such pieces as these—there are odd and startling resemblances between the Dryden of every period and the Yeats of every period. Again, in the controversial poems and in the "characters" there is a great deal that suggests striking comparisons with Mr. Ezra Pound and Mr. T. S. Eliot and so many others of our poets of "wit" that one really wonders why criticism of their work should still so often be made in the light of the reaction against the tradition of the eighteenth century. If eighteenth-century literature were really familiar to us these poets would be at once less reviled and less hailed as innovators. In comparison with Dryden they do not seem to be so very new; they are seldom as fresh, or as interesting, or as profound, or as witty, nor have they a substance that wears, as his does, like iron.

The heroic couplet has long been the symbol of standardization in verse, but one has only to spend a day reading free verse and another reading the couplet—the average of each—and one can have no doubt of the conventionality of free verse and one may likely vote the couplet a more resilient vehicle. As to our contemporary "wits": their essays in "character" seem lacking in substance when compared with the impassioned indignation and imagination of Achitophel, besides seeming far less modern. That poem is so up-to-date that if it were printed in the columns of to-day's newspaper, nine out of ten readers would easily fit it on to living models.

This is possibly the moment for a revaluing of Dryden and for the upsetting of the traditional idea of him as a prosy old gentleman who "elastically paced the limits of a dry and well-packed mind," but who, in off moments, wrote "Alexander's Feast" and the other one or two poems that are in the anthologies. Mr. Van Doren, perhaps, utters the worst insult when he says that "he never lived what is often too glibly called the life of the imagination," and again when he says that Dryden's was the type of mind "that best becomes energized by contact with other minds." This type of mind is not the creative but the third-rate critical mind: Dryden's was not only a great creative mind; it was a great critical mind also. His own age had exactly the same opinion of Chaucer that ours has of Dryden—"a dry old-fashioned wit, not worth reviving."

The age that honoured Dryden was an age that knew a great deal about poetry—when indeed poetry was the natural pursuit of every educated man and every fine gentleman. The Roundheads had been overcome, the Puritans packed off to America, and Cromwell and his ideas long buried, so that the great nobles, free from the terrors of democracy, devoted themselves to poetry. My Lord of Dorset, My Lord of Rochester, and His Grace of Buckingham, tossed off, as it were from the edge of their sword-blades, immortal songs—light love-songs they were, perhaps, tinged with a little war, for their authors were also gallant soldiers; but they were none the less lasting poems. Dryden wrote songs as blithe and rollicking as the best of them, and that gay, proud cavalier quality, with its slight undercurrent of melancholy, never for long left any of his poems—not even his translations. In that most characteristic Virgilian passage, the lament of Mæris for his lost youth, quoted by Mr. Van Doren, Dryden turns the strange, sad Latin, with its *Lacrimæ rerum*—

*Omnia fert ætas, animum quoque; sæpe ego longos
Cantando puerum memini me condere soles:
Nunc obliuia mihi tot carmina, vox quoque Mærim
Iam fugit ipsa; lupi Mærim videre priores—*

into these astonishing lines, with their reckless cavalier dash:

The rest I have forgot; for cares and time
Change all things, and untune my soul to rhyme.

I could have once sung down a summer's sun;
But now the chime of poetry is done;
My voice grows hoarse; I feel the notes decay,
As if the wolves had seen me first to-day.

Did ever a translator so reproduce the sense, and so totally change the spirit? With the following, resurrected by Mr. Van Doren from Dryden's translation of the Eclogues, he does such mad and lovely things that one understands why Keats, that poet of all mad and lovely things, was among his admirers:

White lilies in full canisters they bring,
With all the glories of the purple spring.
The daughters of the flood have searched the mead
For violets pale, and cropped the poppy's head,
The short narcissus and fair daffodil,
Pansies to please the sight, and cassia sweet to smell;
And set soft hyacinths with ironblue,
To shade marsh marigolds of shining hue;
Some bound in order, others loosely strewed,
To dress thy bower, and trim thy new abode.

Dryden wrote all kinds of poetry, for there were many sides to his imagination, and many facets to his passionate satiric mind. Some of his poetry had perhaps better been written in prose—a criticism levelled often enough at contemporary poets. Wordsworth was successful in getting his poetical diction flung into the discard, yet it would be interesting to ask the youngest of the moderns which really seems to them the more old-fashioned—Wordsworth's or Dryden's. With the resurrecting of John Dryden from behind the thorn hedges and brambles sowed round him by nineteenth-century criticism, where, like *Dornröschen*, he lies awaiting rescue, one can hardly doubt that a new light, soft or harsh, would be thrown on modern poetry; for he of all the great dead poets seems the one who would assuredly most indulgently understand the moderns.

MARY M. COLUM.

MR. GRANT'S APOLOGIA.

MR. MADISON GRANT'S book "The Passing of the Great Race," recently issued in revised and amplified form, possesses high documentary value. It is true that the combination of Carlylean and Nietzschean theories of the superman with a biological creed affirming the supremacy of the North European race is no longer a novelty. The Devil, being up-to-date, can quote Galton to his purpose, and the poor devils among his retinue follow suit. In fact, Mr. Grant retails the stock opinions and the stock phrases. Democracy, equality, universal suffrage are flouted with vehemence and iteration (pp. XXXI, 5, 7, 43, 78, 191, 197, 372); the privilege of wealth and the institution of serfdom are defended with candour (pp. 6, 9); progress is ascribed wholly to "a very small number of nations" and to "a very small proportion of the population in such nations" (p. 98). But precisely because the author blurts out what is on his mind, unrestrained by the fear of self-exposure that crows his playmates into a certain degree of lip-homage to the proprieties (pp. VIII, XI), he affords valuable evidence illustrative of his group's psychology. They can not explain him away as he thrusts out his tongue at humanitarian idealism; they could indeed disavow their *enfant terrible*, but that would be contrary to group-ethics.

Not that what Mr. Grant shouts from the housetops can be taken at its face value. For though the brakes of convention are off, the naughty boy is a good deal of a poseur. He is eager to make us angry with his slinging of mud at the standard of liberalism, though he has no idea why the sight of it is so hateful to him, glibly as he explains his reasons for defiling it. But now the crude facts are before us, and, by a kind of higher criticism, it is possible to get at the basis of his vituperation.

To be sure, the task is not an easy one, for there are few subjects on which Mr. Grant fails to express mutually exclusive views, nor is this quality in him confined to technical matters. For example, apart from his antipathy to

¹"The Passing of the Great Race, or the Racial Basis of European History." Madison Grant. Fourth revised edition with a documentary supplement. Preface by Henry Fairfield Osborn. New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons. \$3.50.

the Roman Catholic Church, which is assailed for its democratic spirit (p. 85), it is impossible to discover his attitude towards the Christian faith. The thought of other cults encroaching on its domain seems to enrage him, yet he deliberately deprecates its humanitarian spirit in favour of pagan aristocracy (pp. 91, 219, 222). Mr. Grant's views on women are not less bewildering: he at the same time regards women as a more primitive edition of the species and as worthy of the esteem expressed in Nordic women's rights; they are credited both with a perverse tendency to mate out of their caste and with an intuitive knowledge of caste differences (pp. 22, 27, 228).

It is not surprising, then, that on the difficult race-problems that form the chief topic of his volume, Mr. Grant betrays not only the ignorance of a half-educated layman but the confusion of an undisciplined intelligence. A full concordance of his contradictions would fill a volume; we must content ourselves with a modest assortment.

Mr. Grant uncritically accepts the classification of the Caucasian types popularized by Ripley, though it is far from certain that all Europeans can be classed as either Nordic, Alpine, or Mediterranean. Thus, Professor Czekanowski, than whom there is no higher authority in these matters, has recently reasserted his conviction that the old scheme, which works tolerably well in Western Europe, does not adequately represent East European conditions. For example, instead of Mr. Grant's gratuitous assumption of a tall, fair, long-skulled substratum in Poland, Professor Czekanowski finds evidence for a short and moderately broad-headed type antedating all others and, in addition, discovers varieties quite anomalous from the old point of view, such as a tall and fair yet distinctly broad-skulled type.

Still more naïve is Mr. Grant's tendency to see in every tall European population a trace of Nordic contact. As though the Cheyenne Indians, the Patagonians, the Polynesians—to say nothing of the Wahuma and the Nilotics of East Africa—were not as tall as the Nordics! Why, then, since tallness appears sporadically, must every indication of it among Caucasians have a Nordic origin? But Mr. Grant's obsession leads to a characteristic display of his methods. The poor Tyrolese, being tall but brachycephalous, become a favourite butt of his interpretative skill. First, they appear as (except for their stature), "lacking in Nordic characters" (pp. 30, 36). Somewhat later they are introduced as "merely Nordized Alpines" (p. 135). Lest we remain in doubt as to the meaning of this phrase, we are told not only that they are "so thoroughly Nordized that their true racial affinities are betrayed by their round skulls alone" (p. 141), but also that they "seem to be largely Nordic except in respect to their round skull" (p. 190). We may well wonder what their "true racial affinities" are when they are ultimately dismissed as merely comprising "a very considerable Nordic element which is in political control" (p. 210).

Mr. Grant's logic is astounding. The Tyrolese, though broad-skulled, are at least sometimes regarded as essentially Nordic, yet elsewhere we are told categorically, "that the Swede has a long skull and the Savoyard a round skull does prove them to be racially distinct" (p. 23). Yet on the same page it is admitted that the American Indians constitute a single race despite the great variability in their cephalic index. Mr. Grant should try to stick to his criteria.

That our author has not even clarified his ideas about his favourite stock, is possibly even more remarkable. "Denmark, Norway, and Sweden," we read, "are purely Nordic" (p. 211); but the next paragraph informs us that in South-western Norway and in Denmark "there is a substantial number of short, dark, round heads of Alpine affinities." Considering that blond or brown hair enters into the definition of the Nordic type (pp. 20, 117), it is likewise puzzling to find that the "purely Nordic" Normans are "often dark," are possessed of "a dash of brunet" (p. 207). For a brief moment the reader is led to believe that the superior elegance of the Norman as compared with the coarser "typical Teuton" is due

to this "dash," but on the next page the upper-class Normans appear once more as probably pure Scandinavians and the dark strains are attributed to their "lower classes," the inevitable scapegoat.

It would be too much to expect Mr. Grant to offer a philosophical vindication of his basic propositions. To him the prejudices of his clique are axiomatic statements; hence, though there is constant reference to lower and higher races, no attempt is made to justify the invidious distinction. The only attempt at definition of the terms rests on the degree of specialization; that is, of departure from the animal ancestor. So elementary a treatise as Professor Arthur Keith's "Man" might have taught Mr. Grant that the Negro is as specialized as the Caucasian; but the author fails to understand the import of his own statement that "the very highest as well as the very lowest species" of man retain a trait lost by Negro, Mongol, and American Indian (p. 31)!

Incidentally, Mr. Grant's exaggeration of existing racial differences into specific, if not subgeneric, character is contrary to the soundest anthropological interpretation. It is not the extent of the differences but the presence or absence of intermediate forms that counts in determining this question, and it is an established fact that the most divergent types of humanity can be thus connected. Moreover recent writers have stressed a point that has apparently remained untouched by Mr. Grant's researches. The races of man correspond not to wild but to domesticated animals. But domesticated animals are notoriously variable, and, what is more, they vary in the same characters that serve to distinguish races—size, skin-colour, texture and abundance of hair. Negro, Caucasian, and Mongol certainly do not differ more than St. Bernard, dachshund, and greyhound, all of which our most recent authorities derive from a common wolf type. Until Mr. Grant has more to offer by way of argument than a pontifical decree, we shall prefer the interpretation of Professors Rudolf Martin and Eugen Fischer, who regard all living types of men as domesticated varieties of a single species.

If Mr. Grant shows ignorance and misunderstanding of the facts of racial differences, he invents them *ad hoc* on the problems of miscegenation. It is not merely not a biological law that in racial mixture the lower, less specialized race prevails (p. 18), but the very formulation of the principle demonstrates an incapacity to grasp modern conceptions of heredity. Mendelian research knows nothing of a prepotent influence of one race over another: it has merely established the dominance of certain definite characters. More specifically, Professor Fischer has proved that in the mixture of Hottentots with Boers neither race predominates, but certain features of the Boer come to be united with certain features of the Hottentot.

It is not as regards physical features alone that Mr. Grant is sent hopelessly floundering by the grim necessity of arranging his thoughts in harmony with elementary logic. In his logical universe things are constantly not themselves. Hence the somewhat unjust charge made by his critics that he ignores the achievements of non-Nordic Europeans. As a matter of fact, he is fair and even generous to them, provided only one reads properly selected passages and does not read on far enough to find these passages nullified. The brachycephalic Alpines are now and again patted on the back as a sturdy and not altogether disreputable lot, with "undoubtedly . . . great potentialities for future development," nay, as a bulwark of Western culture against the Mohammedan East (pp. 44, 59). To them is due the founding of Babylonian civilization and the introduction of great cultural innovations into Europe. Yet British greatness is "undoubtedly" due to the virtual absence of Alpines (p. 137), though we have been emphatically assured that hereditary characters are fixed so far as historic centuries are concerned (p. 18).

Stranger still is Mr. Grant's discussion of the Mediterranean stock. At times his comments are not only eulogistic but verge on the dithyrambic. The honour of having built up the classic civilization of Greece is bluntly awarded to this stock, its supremacy in art is accepted as

unquestioned, nay, the Nordics are referred to as "some-what stupid" by comparison (p. 229). What, then, is all the row about? Why this eternal lamentation over the obsequies of the Nordics as if their continued dominance were a *sine qua non* of human progress?

Why? Because Mr. Grant cares nothing for human progress. That is why he can afford to be generous to the puny Mediterranean's or the broad-skulled Alpine's contributions to culture, for these things are meaningless to him. Nay, at bottom even the Nordic race is not in itself an object of emotional value to him. His ostensible pro-Nordic propaganda is a mere hoax, an amusing example of self-delusion. In the whole of human history one thing and one thing only catches his eye and crows him into obeisance and adoration, Brute Force. In so far, and only in so far, as Nordics have bullied other peoples, only as hosts of military inflamed with blood-lust, they gain the stamp of Mr. Grant's approval. The Junker spits upon the meek and lowly befriended by Christianity (p. 221), but our author gloats over the vision of big blond princes leading little brunet Mediterraneans to be "remorselessly butchered by the leaders on either side" (p. 159).

Does Mr. Grant care for the Nordics as such? Well, Scandinavia is for him "the chief nursery and broodland of the master race," the last retreat where it maintains its full vigour. Yet on all the countries in question he pronounces the damning verdict: "To-day all three seem to be intellectually anæmic" (p. 210). We rub our eyes in astonishment until we have re-read the paragraph; then the mist clears, and we see that what repels Mr. Grant is Scandinavia's loss of military power: Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes have ceased to provide "a nursery for soldiers," hence their condemnation. What matters it that Danish skill and thrift could retrieve the country's tottering economic equilibrium against overwhelming odds? What matter the names of Ibsen and Strindberg, of Arrhenius and Hoeffding? Only the mailed fist can satisfy a sadistic Junkerism.

In his brief, not for the real Nordics of to-day—but for their Berserker spirit unabated but spiritualized—but for an extinct or legendary race of bellicose blond beasts, Mr. Grant and his sponsors present merely a form of psychiatric maladjustment. They would feel at home, one imagines, amidst the rear-alley stilettoings of Celini's Florence or in the tavern brawls of Marlowe's England; in a world menaced by a growing taste for the arts of peace they are perishing with claustrophobia. The career of the Bowery gangster beckons, but alas! it no longer yields social preferment. But let us not muzzle these monomaniacs; let us be fair to them. The Junker beast, even in his hour of defeat, lives not by bread alone. From the depths of his consciousness, from the sense of his unfitness for modern conditions, there rises the ineradicable desire to vindicate his ways to himself. Let us not begrudge him the arrogance that masks his abasement.

ROBERT H. LOWIE.

SHORTER NOTICES.

It is a pity that Doctor Stekel's more serious contributions to psycho-analytic literature should remain buried in the original German, while casual collections of his slighter essays, articles and pamphlets find an English market on both sides of the Atlantic. The volume of essays¹ recently collected by Dr. Tannenbaum, while it contains much fresh matter and is thought-stimulating, does not give a fair idea of the amount of honest investigation on which Dr. Stekel's apparently airy dogmatism is founded. Dr. Stekel has a facile and almost journalistic style—which does not seem to lend itself very well to translation—and the assembling of short résumés originally written to stand alone inevitably gives the effect of prolixity and confusion, so that the book has a superficial and unscientific air which is likely to obscure the sound sense of his essays on sexual hygiene and to discredit his bold but interesting theory of the various obsessions and compulsions. In fact, it is to be feared that the book may give the scoffers one more excuse for their ribaldry.

V. G.

¹"Doctor Stekel's Essays." Translated and edited by S. A. Tannenbaum. New York: The Critic and Guide Company. \$3.00.

THERE is, in the construction of a novel, such a thing as working out the complication to a degree that alienates the reader's interest. Up to a certain point, the interplay of character and situation may be followed with increasing attention, but there comes a moment when one realizes that the manipulation—and not the legitimate plot—has become the paramount element in the novelist's scheme; and with this discovery one parts company with the author and views the succeeding pages with distrust and suspicion. Mr. Oliver Onions has pushed across this perilous border in "The Tower of Oblivion,"¹ and turned what might have been an entertaining piece of fiction into a mere springboard for his exaggerated claptrap. A hero who grows progressively younger might be acceptable, but not when the process is accompanied by all the manifestly ridiculous phenomena that Mr. Onions has seen fit to thrust into the narrative. The facility with which the story is unfolded serves only to emphasize its isolation from reality—not alone in the externals of the plot, but equally in the motives and impulses of the mechanical toys with which it is peopled.

L. B.

IN the preface to his "Introduction to Mythology" Mr. Spence remarks: "Thirty years ago, if a student of myth had been asked who Janus was, he would probably have replied: 'A Roman god of origins.' To-day he might see in him a development of the 'kirm-baby.'" It is thus that relativity is becoming the keyword in the sciences; and in this instance mythology ceases to be the recording of specific myths for their informative or documentary value, and becomes the comparison of myths to determine their common denominators. It is a short step, however, from the grouping of myths by parallelisms or recurrences to the explanation of these parallelisms by the formulation of some underlying principle; for these comparisons show "a regularity of development not to be accounted for by motiveless fancy, but by laws of formation." One finds, for instance, the continual recurrence of the Deluge in the myths of peoples scattered over the entire earth; and if the Hebrew myth is explained as a borrowing from the Babylonian, how is the prevalence of the same subject accounted for in the American Indian? Is this due to some purely physical relationship? Or does it testify to a certain broad similarity in all human brains? On this phase of the subject Mr. Spence is at great pains to maintain no thesis at all; although he does summarize what has been done in the way of establishing monistic principles, while he himself holds to the opinion that such efforts have been more invigorating than true, and that the interrelations of mythology should be formulated on a less wholesale basis. In his chapter dealing with the bearing of myth on folklore, he gives some interesting material relating to the metamorphosis of the former into the latter. The belief in the power of iron, for instance, to ward off evil fairies may be connected with the times of the pre-historic bronze-users, whose weapons were shivered to pieces by the users of iron; iron thus coming to be looked upon as a magic power. If the writer of this note could be permitted to add his mite to knowledge, may not this old iron-spirit be traced in a modest form even to present-day America? In the children's game of "iron-tag," the person who stands on iron can not be tagged by the person who is "it."

K. B.

A REVIEWER'S NOTEBOOK.

"In my autobiography," writes Mr. Frank Harris, in the preface to his new book, "I intend to be franker than the world will allow me to be in these portraits." Judged by the standards of our day, Mr. Harris is already sufficiently candid. There is, however, a candour that is not of our day, the candour of the eighteenth century: is Mr. Harris capable of this, and is he going to give us a book which we can set beside that favourite work of his own, the *Memoirs of Casanova*? Mr. Harris is a master of the art of ignoring public opinion, and it is plain that he has a gift at once for experience and for the direct expression of it. Moreover, as a literary soldier of fortune he has had one of the most varied and adventurous careers of our time. He is sometimes accused of drawing a long bow; for why, people ask, should celebrated authors who died forty years ago have taken into their confidence a young man with nothing to recommend him but his wits, and a "ruf-

¹"The Tower of Oblivion." Oliver Onions. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

²"An Introduction to Mythology." Lewis Spence. New York: Moffat, Yard and Company. \$3.00.

³"Contemporary Portraits: Third Series." Frank Harris. New York: Published by the Author, 96 Fifth Avenue. \$2.00.